

Calypso Rose with Kobo Town

Friday, January 26, 2018 at 8:00pm

This is the 794th concert in Koerner Hall

Calypso Rose, vocals

Kobo Town

Drew Gonsalves, lead vocal, guitar & cuatro

Francesco Emmanuel, guitar

Terence Woode, trombone

Jan Morgan, trumpet

Don Stewart, bass

Robert Milicevic, drum kit

Calypso Rose

Calypso Rose, born Rose McCartha Linda Sandy Lewis in 1940 in Bethel, a small village on the island of Tobago, looks fresher than ever at 77. Calypso, which address everyday problems as well as important social issues, became universal in the 1950s, notably through Harry Belafonte, and was exclusively delivered by males until a troublemaker entered the scene and blew-up the conventions. In 1972, Calypso Rose was the first artist to be awarded the title of Calypso Queen and, six years later, the gender-neutral title of Calypso Monarch.

Calypso Rose has always been a fighter who overcame abuse and a variety of health issues. This tireless worker has composed almost 800 songs, starting at age 13, and spent 17 years singing on cruise ships for the New York-based company, Celebration at Sea, before playing on the legendary stages of the Apollo and Madison Square Garden with two of the greatest calypsonians, Lord Kitchener and Mighty Sparrow. She is also an artist who has received more honours than most in her country and who is celebrated by the Trinidadian community throughout the world.

Her many albums include *Calypso At Dirty Jim's* and the latest, *Far From Home*, which is filled to the brim with joy as it also bears the traces of the ever-alert conscience of a woman who is still fighting the good fight, and denouncing domestic violence and social injustice.

Kobo Town

Founded and fronted by émigré Trinidadian songwriter Drew Gonsalves, Kobo Town's music has been variously described as "an intoxicating blend of lilting calypsonian wit, dancehall reggae, and trombone-heavy brass" (*Guardian*) and a "unique, transnational composite of rhythm, poetry and activist journalism." (*Exclaim!*) From their home in Toronto, the Juno Award nominated group has brought their distinct calypso-inspired sound to audiences across the world, from Port-of-Spain to Paris and from Montreal to Malaysia.

At once brooding and joyous, intensely poetic and highly danceable, Gonsalves's songs betray deep roots in Caribbean folk music, while the band delivers them with an indomitable energy that has earned them a considerable following far beyond the niche of world music enthusiasts and calypso fans.

On his new release, *Where the Galleon Sank* (2017), Gonsalves continues to explore 500 years of history through his post-colonial, Trinidadian lens, armed with his trademark wit and gift for melody. Maverick producer Ivan Duran is once again manning the console, creating a warm, percolating, richly layered sound. As on Kobo Town's two previous outings, *Galleon* is filled with buoyant music that stimulates both body and mind; propulsive, infectious

grooves are juxtaposed with incisive lyrics that expose human folly and our tendency to repeat our mistakes. Part poet, part correspondent, Gonsalves delivers compelling dispatches from events both real and imaginary.

Calypso Rose and Kobo Town are making their Royal Conservatory debuts tonight.